

AN OVERVIEW

The Public Health Improvement Partnership (PHIP) works to guide the development of Washington's public health system through a shared vision:

"An improved public health system makes a difference in the health of communities."

The Partnership creates and accomplishes goals that could not be done alone. This shared vision helps create the type of public health system Washington State needs in the future.

PHIP Partners include:

- NW Center for Public Health Practice (UW School of Public Health and Community Medicine)
- Washington State American Indian Health Commission
- Washington Health Foundation
- Washington State Board of Health
- Washington State Department of Health
- Washington State Public Health Association

Every two years, the partnership publishes the Public Health Improvement Plan Report, which fulfills the Legislative mandate, [RCW 43.70.520](#) and [43.70.580](#). The report describes the committees' work which moves the system toward realizing the shared vision and includes recommendations for the coming biennium. Examples of work published in past reports include: Standards for Public Health in Washington State; a Report Card on Health in Washington; an enumeration of the public health workers in Washington State; analysis of public health funding and models for estimating costs needed for public health services.

PHIP COMMITTEES

The shared vision of the PHIP work is accomplished through committees comprised of partner representatives to ensure multiple perspectives are incorporated. The following active committees are working on these activities:

- ... **Activities and Services Committee** – defines what public health is and the core public health activities that need to happen at the local and state level. The committee will conduct an inventory of these activities and services and will work to create a long-term system solution so that core public health activities can easily be understood throughout the state.
- ... **Key Health Indicators Committee** – answers the question "How healthy are we"? The committee has selected 32 Local Public Health Indicators for which county specific data is available. Collectively, these indicators provide a snapshot of health status, health behavior, and public health system performance at the local level across the state. These indicators are being used by local public health agencies for identifying health issues, setting priorities, and focusing investments. They also allow for comparisons over time among jurisdictions, and to a statewide average. Most of this was not possible before as everyone was using different indicators and measures.

Additionally, the committee is actively engaged in developing a Community Health Assessment Tool, a computer-based application which will allow public health professionals to access, analyze, and display population-based data to further enhance their abilities to understand and address public health issues in their communities.

- ... **Performance Management Committee** – developed “The Standards for Public Health in Washington State”. Every three years, all local public health jurisdictions and divisions of the state Department of Health are visited and assessed to determine if they are meeting the standards. Each agency gets an individual report of its progress in meeting the standards. An overall summary report is also produced so that plans can be made for system wide improvements. This effort started in 2001 with a baseline measurement and much progress was shown in meeting the standards in the 2005 assessment.
- ... A recent round of site visits will result in an overall report for 2008.
- ... **Public Health Information Technology Committee** – helps the public health system use technology to share information rapidly. Since each local public health agency has its own information infrastructure, they do not develop in the same direction or at the same pace. The committee made funding available to local health jurisdictions to help train the workforce in basic computer skills.
- ... The committee is also actively involved in the implementation and test of WA SECURES, a public health alerting and communications system, which provides effective communication across all health departments and other emergency response agencies in the state in the event of emergency.
- ... **Workforce Development Committee** – helps ensure Washington State has the public health workforce skills and abilities needed. This committee focuses on the 4,500 employees of state and local health departments to ensure that they have access to formal and informal training. Training opportunities include orientations, mentoring, web-based learning, distance learning, and leadership development.

Recruitment and retention are two focal points of the committee which has resulted in the statewide use of a national online recruitment tool – APHA CareerMart, and three recent reports on Washington’s Public Health workforce. The committee is also working on expanding the use and curriculum base in the statewide learning management system, [SmartPH](#).

For more information and products, please contact:

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